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SUBJECT: CONSTITUTION APPROVED; PARLIAMENT TO DEBATE  
ELECTORAL LAW

REF: 05 KINSHASA 2087 ET AL

1. (U) Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) President Abbe Apollinaire Malu Malu announced January 11 that Congolese voters approved the DRC's new constitution by a margin of 84 percent to 16 percent. The CEI said that 62 percent of the DRC's 25 million voters participated in the December 18 referendum. For the constitution to enter into effect, the referendum results must be certified by the Supreme Court later this month.

2. (U) Voter participation was especially high in the eastern part of the DRC, as was the "yes" vote in favor of the constitution. Voter turnout was much lower in Kinshasa and the Kasais, strongholds of the opposition UDPS party. The results by province were as follows: Equateur, 84 percent to 16 percent; Bandundu, 89 percent to 11 percent; Maniema, 96 percent to 4 percent; South Kivu, 98 percent to 2 percent; North Kivu, 97 percent to 3 percent; Kasai Occidental, 59 percent to 41 percent; Kasai Orientale, 81 percent to 19 percent; Katanga, 91 percent to 9 percent; Bas-Congo, 73 percent to 27 percent; Province Orientale, 87 percent to 13 percent; and Kinshasa, 52 percent to 48 percent.

3. (U) The approval of the constitution sets the stage for national elections in the first half of 2006 and for an elected government to be installed by June 30. The next major -- and urgent -- step is for parliament to consider and approve an electoral law. To that end, a presidential decree was issued yesterday evening convening an extraordinary session of parliament as of today - January 12.  
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